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Governor
Deval Patrick

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PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES \$25.6 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING

Grants will support technologies to control costs and enhance quality of health care

BOSTON - Friday, February 12, 2010 - Governor Deval Patrick and the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation today announced that Massachusetts has secured \$25.6 million in federal funding to support health information technology initiatives in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts will receive a \$15 million grant to support the implementation of electronic health records for approximately 2,500 health care providers in small group practices across the Commonwealth and an additional \$10.6 million grant to support the development of a secure network to support a statewide health information exchange. Electronic records enable providers to have instant access to vital information about a patient's lab results and medical history that may impact treatment decisions. These proven technologies help reduce costs by eliminating unnecessary or duplicative tests, reducing errors and improving health care decision-making.

"Massachusetts is a national leader in health care reform and home to some of the best health care institutions and most innovative health technology companies in the world," said Governor Patrick. "This federal funding will help reduce health care costs and improve patient care using proven technologies, many of which are developed right here in Massachusetts."

In November 2009, Governor Patrick met with officials in Washington to advance specific opportunities for Massachusetts to speed the deployment of electronic medical records through a secure health information exchange network that would safeguard patient privacy. With strong advocacy from Governor Patrick and the Congressional Delegation, the Commonwealth has been allocated the full \$25.6 million for which the state is eligible from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Electronic medical records and a statewide information exchange are the common sense solution to reducing medical errors, restraining costs, and reforming a broken system that isn't efficient for doctors, nurses, or patients. This investment will help ensure that our state's hospitals remain the best in the world," said Senator John Kerry.

"This federal funding for Health information technology is great news for patients and health care providers in Massachusetts. Massachusetts has been a pioneer in developing technologies that improve the way health information is used to support better patient care," said Congressman Edward J. Markey. "This vital federal funding will provide doctors and qualified health professionals with the technological tools they need to protect patients from disease while still protecting their privacy. As the author of comprehensive health IT legislation in 2008, I strongly supported funding for health IT when Congress considered it as part of the Economic Recovery Act last year. At the time, I attached privacy and security safeguards so that patients would not have to compromise their medical privacy to reap the benefits of electronic medical records."

"This funding will assist the Commonwealth in providing support, guidance and information in order to accelerate the development of cutting-edge health information technology across the state. These systems are both good for health practices and for patients, and overall are important to control costs and to enhance safety in health care. It is great to see our health programs benefiting from these Recovery Act funds," said Congressman John Tierney.

"I am pleased to see Massachusetts receive federal funding for health information technology," said Congressman Stephen F. Lynch. "These grants will help cut costs, streamline our healthcare system and improve patient care."

"Harnessing health information technologies leads to better, more coordinated care for patients," said Secretary of Health and Human Services Dr. JudyAnn Bigby. "As the national leader on health care reform, Massachusetts is now poised to use this investment of federal funding to build on our accomplishments by using technology to promote coordinated patient care and control costs."

Governor Patrick previously designated the Massachusetts e-Health Institute (MeHI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, as the state entity to administer federal funding for health care technologies through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

As part of the \$15 million grant to promote the use electronic medical records in small physician practices, MeHI will work with stakeholders and the state's Health Information Technology (HIT) Council to develop a plan to:

- Review state and federal privacy and security standards and regulations for electronic health records and health information exchange to ensure that private health information is protected;
- Promote and oversee implementation of electronic health records in all provider and hospital settings as part of an interoperable health information exchange;
- Establish a collaborative governance model that actively engages the private sector;
- Create a financially sustainable statewide health information exchange that will facilitate the exchange of clinical and administrative information;
- Develop a strategy for HIT workforce development; and
- Enhance public health and quality reporting.

Administering the \$10.6 million grant to establish a statewide health information exchange, MeHI will serve as one of the nation's "Regional Extension Centers," responsible for offering technical assistance, guidance and information on best practices to speed deployment of health information technology. MeHI, guided by the state's HIT Council, will:

- Review state and federal privacy and security standards and regulations for electronic health records and health information exchange to ensure that private health information is protected;
- Develop ad hoc working groups of experts in health technology, privacy and other policy leaders to provide guidance to the HIT Council and MeHI in the certification process;
- Coordinate the education, outreach and technical assistance required to enable priority providers to achieve meaningful use of certified electronic health record systems;
- Contract for services to qualified Implementation and Optimization Organizations;
- Provide grants to Implementing Organizations, as designated by state law, to enable successful adoption of electronic health records, including vendor selection, product implementation, practice redesign, change management and technical support; and
- Ensure compliance with state and federal standards and policies.

"Having a uniform system of electronic medical records throughout the Commonwealth decreases costs and improves patient care," said Senate President Therese Murray, one of the architects of Massachusetts' health care reform law. "One of the key components to the success of our cost containment law is that every provider is able to comply with the mandate and this federal funding will help us move this health care goal forward."

"This federal funding gives Massachusetts the opportunity to drive down health care costs while providing more efficient care to our patients," said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo. "The Massachusetts e-Health Institute has the level of expertise necessary to successfully serve as the Regional Extension Center here in Massachusetts. Their diligence in developing a statewide plan of implementation positions them to hit the ground running with this federal funding, and I applaud their achievements thus far."

"Expanding the use and efficiency of electronic medical records is exactly the kind of project for which federal stimulus funding can be used to the greatest benefit," said Senator Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Federal Stimulus Oversight. "I am extremely pleased that the Commonwealth will continue to lead the nation in innovative healthcare reform. Electronic medical records will simultaneously drive down costs, while improving the quality of health care by enabling greater accessibility of information for healthcare providers and continuity of care for patients."

"Securing this funding will help ensure that we not only can implement the technology to improve patient care but will also help us do so in a way that will maintain patient privacy. Streamlining the process through which consumers and health professionals access information can lead to faster decision making and reduce overall costs," said Representative David P. Linsky, House Chair, Joint Committee on Federal Stimulus Oversight.

"Our strategy is to tap into the world-class institutions and groups that are successfully implementing these technologies in provider settings throughout the state," said Richard Shoup, Ph.D., Director of the Massachusetts e-Health Institute. "We will work to maximize the public benefits of electronic health records for patients and providers in Massachusetts."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes significant provisions pertaining to health information technology. These provisions are referred to as the HITECH Act. The HITECH Act establishes as a goal the use of certified electronic health records for every person in the United States by 2014 and creates reimbursement incentives through Medicare and Medicaid for providers who demonstrate they are "meaningful users" of electronic health records connected through health information

exchanges.

Additional information about the HITECH grants available through the workforce development program is available at <http://HealthIT.HHS.gov/> and www.grants.gov.

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